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**Date:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 2:05 PM  
**To:** Joshua Gross <[joshua.gross@fgsglobal.com](mailto:joshua.gross@fgsglobal.com)>  
**Subject:** Update on the the situation in Laas-Anod, Somaliland

Good afternoon,

I am writing to follow up on my previous note regarding troubling developments in Somaliland's Sool region.

Since Monday, terrorists have brazenly launched three consecutive days of attacks on Somaliland National Army bases and an adjacent residence where several Cabinet ministers are currently residing in Laas-Anod, an administrative capital of the Sool region. The Somaliland National Army has promptly [repelled](#) each attack, defending the bases and securing the residence, and remains in a defensive position to [avoid further escalation](#) of the situation.

Somaliland government representatives had been in Laas-Anod to [meet with clan leaders and the local community](#) as part of the ongoing mediation efforts following a violent episode earlier in the year (*see prior note on this below*). Until these unprovoked attacks began, those discussions were constructive and the parties were on the path towards reaching consensus on a peaceful course forward.

Current intelligence suggests that these attacks were conducted [by al-Shabaab](#) and were supported by troops from the Puntland Administration across Somaliland's eastern border. Al-Shabaab has historically exploited local grievances to justify attacks against government representatives in neighboring Somalia. Somaliland's government believes this week's attacks were designed to provoke an outsized response from its security forces.

To avoid escalation and prevent the further loss of lives, President of Somaliland Muse Bihi Abdi has [ordered](#) Somaliland's military to exercise extreme restraint and avoid any harm to civilians. Several al-Shabaab militants and members of Puntland's military are currently in Somaliland's custody, while numerous individuals who were misled by these groups into taking up arms against Somaliland have been released to clan elders in Laas-Anod. Authorities in Hargeisa remain in regular communication with government partners in the region to provide support as this situation develops, including assistance to those displaced by the fighting and the provision of aid to local hospitals.

The Republic of Somaliland is committed to maintaining the stability it has worked so diligently to develop since its independence over 30 years ago. Somaliland joins its international partners in [calling for an end to the violence](#), the protection of civilians, and the resumption of talks that were disrupted by these unprovoked attacks on its soldiers and government representatives. Somaliland also calls on its international partners to address the involvement of the Puntland Administration in [attempting to incite a clan uprising](#), supporting these attacks, and providing a safe haven to terrorists seeking to destabilize Somaliland.

Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions regarding these developments. Somaliland's Representative to the United States, Bashir Goth, is also available to speak with you, if desired.

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